



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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State Health Department Cautions Residents About Risk of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning When Using Alternative Power and Heat Sources

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health is cautioning residents about the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning from using alternative power and heat sources during power outages, according to Ken Wangler, manager of the Indoor Air Quality Program for the North Dakota Department of Health.

Sources of carbon monoxide include kerosene and gasoline space heaters, gasoline generators, fireplaces and wood-burning stoves. The state health department recommends resident take the following precautions when using alternative heat sources:

- If portable generators are used, do not place them in an enclosed area such as a garage or near a window, door or fresh-air intake. Place the generator at least 50 feet from the home if possible or as far away as practical. Be careful not to place it too near a neighboring residence.
- Use proper fuel in kerosene and gasoline space heaters. Always ensure the area is well ventilated.
- Open flues when fireplaces are in use.
- Choose wood-burning stoves that are certified to meet U.S. Environmental Protection Agency emission standards; make certain that doors on all wood-burning stoves fit tightly.
- Install a home carbon monoxide alarm.

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include:

- A mild headache progressing to a throbbing headache
- Shortness of breath
- Irritability

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- Emotional instability
- Impaired judgment
- Memory loss
- Rapid fatigue

Symptoms can progress rapidly to coma and death. Treatment of carbon monoxide poisoning includes immediately removing the victim from the building, providing fresh air and summoning medical assistance.

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